

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) A method of accessing a remote postage account from a local postage evidencing device, comprising:

connecting to a remote postage evidencing system via a local postage evidencing device, said local postage evidencing device having a local postage account;

identifying a remote postage account on the remote postage evidencing system that is to be used to print postage on the local postage evidencing device;

selecting a desired postage amount to be printed on the local postage evidencing device;

reducing a balance on the remote postage account without transferring the value of the postage amount to the local account, thereby maintaining a same local postage account balance; and

printing the desired postage amount on the local postage evidencing device.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

printing the desired postage amount on the local postage evidencing device without reducing a balance on the local postage account.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

authenticating a user with the remote postage evidencing system.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

connecting to the remote postage evidencing system using a wireless connection.

18. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

connecting to the remote postage evidencing system using a wireline connection.

19. (Original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

identifying a user to the local postage evidencing device using a biometric input.

20. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a postage meter.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein the ~~dedicated~~ local postage account is a register that reflects the amount of postage that is currently authorized on the device.

22. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a postage dispensing kiosk.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22 wherein the ~~dedicated~~ local postage account is an amount of postage purchased by a user at the kiosk.

24. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a personal computer coupled to a printer.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein the local postage account is a stored value of postage that has been downloaded from an Internet-based postage service.

26. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the remote postage evidencing system is an Internet-based postage service.

27. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the remote postage evidencing system comprises a postage account established by the United States Postal Service.

28-31. (Canceled)

32. (New) A method of accessing a remote postage account from a local postage evidencing device, comprising:

providing a remote postage account server system, the remote postage account server system having one or more remote postage accounts;

providing a local postage evidencing system having a local postage account, said local postage evidencing system adapted for data communication with said remote postage account server system, wherein the local postage evidencing system is further configured to use a selected one of the local postage account and the one or more remote postage accounts on an individual basis for postage generation transactions, and wherein the balance of the local postage account remains unchanged when the local postage evidencing system uses a remote postage account of said one or more remote postage accounts for a postage generation transaction.

33. (New) The method of claim 32 wherein the local postage evidencing system is a postage meter.

34. (New) The method of claim 32 wherein the local postage evidencing system is a self-service kiosk.

35. (New) The method of claim 32 wherein the local postage evidencing system is a personal computer coupled to a printer.

36. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein the local postage account is a stored value of postage that has been downloaded from an Internet-based postage service.

37. (New) The method of claim 32 wherein the remote postage server system comprises an Internet-based postage service.

38. (New) A method of accessing a remote postage account from a local postage evidencing device, said local postage evidencing device configured to selectively access a local postage account or a remote postage account, said method comprising:

accessing the remote postage account to purchase postage to be printed by the local postage evidencing device without accessing the local postage account; and  
printing the purchased postage using the local postage evidencing device.